

Fun with Fall Leaves: A Week-Long Exploration

Topic: Science, Art, Sensory Exploration

Age Group: 2 Years Old

Setting: Homeschool (easily adaptable for a small group)

Materials Needed for the Week:

- A collection of fallen leaves (various colors, shapes, and sizes) gathered from outside
 - A basket or bag for collecting leaves
 - Construction paper (red, yellow, brown, orange, green)
 - Child-safe glue or glue stick
 - Washable paint (fall colors like red, yellow, orange, brown)
 - Paper plates for paint
 - Large sheets of paper or poster board
 - Crayons (with paper removed for rubbings)
 - A large bin or box for a sensory bin
 - Optional: Magnifying glass, small toy animals, picture books about fall/leaves
-

Learning Objectives for the Week:

By the end of this week, the learner will be able to:

- Point to different colors of leaves (red, yellow, brown).
 - Explore leaves using their senses (touching, hearing them crunch).
 - Participate in a simple leaf-themed art activity.
 - Practice simple vocabulary like "leaf," "fall," "crunch," "big," and "little."
-

Daily Lesson Plans

Day 1: Wonderful Leaf Colors

Introduction (Hook & Objectives)

- **Hook:** Show your child a very bright red or yellow leaf. Say with excitement, "Look! Wow! Look at this pretty leaf! What color is it?"
 - **Objective:** "Today, we are going to find colorful leaves! We will look for red leaves and yellow leaves."
-

Body (Content & Practice)

- **I Do (Model):** Go on a "Leaf Hunt" outside or use your pre-collected leaves. Pick up a leaf and say, "I found a leaf! This leaf is RED. Red leaf." Hold it up and point to its color.
- **We Do (Guided Practice):** Take your child's hand. "Let's find a yellow leaf together. Is this one yellow? Yes! We found a yellow leaf! Yay!" Put all the collected leaves in your basket.
- **You Do (Independent Practice):** Lay out pieces of red, yellow, and brown construction paper. Let your child explore the basket of leaves. Say, "Can you put the red leaf on the red paper?" Guide them as needed. Narrate their actions: "You found a brown one! Look at all the pretty leaves."

Conclusion (Closure & Recap)

- **Recap:** Point to the sorted piles of leaves. "We did it! We found red leaves, yellow leaves, and brown leaves. So many pretty colors!"
 - **Song:** (To the tune of "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star")
*Leaves are falling, all around,
On the trees and on the ground.
Red and yellow, brown and bright,
What a happy, fall-y sight!
Leaves are falling, all around,
On the trees and on the ground.*
-

Day 2: Big Leaves, Little Leaves

Introduction (Hook & Objectives)

- **Hook:** Hold one very large leaf and one very tiny leaf. Say, "Look! A BIG leaf! And a little, little leaf!" Use your hands to show "big" and "little."
- **Objective:** "Today, we're going to find BIG leaves and little leaves!"

Body (Content & Practice)

- **I Do (Model):** Using your leaf collection, pick up a large leaf. "This is a BIG leaf. So big!" Then pick up a small one. "This is a LITTLE leaf. So little!"
- **We Do (Guided Practice):** Hand your child a big leaf and a little leaf. "Let's feel them. Which one is big? Yes! That one is big. Which one is little?" Help them compare.
- **You Do (Independent Practice):** Give your child a piece of paper and some crayons (paper off). Show them how to place a leaf under the paper and rub the crayon on top. "Let's make a picture of the leaf!" Do this with a big leaf and a little leaf. Talk about the shapes as they appear. "Wow, a big leaf picture! Now a little one!"

Conclusion (Closure & Recap)

- **Recap:** Look at the leaf rubbings together. "We found big leaves and little leaves today! You made a picture of a big leaf and a little leaf!"
-

Day 3: The Sound of Leaves

Introduction (Hook & Objectives)

- **Hook:** Hold a dry, crunchy leaf up to your ear and crush it. "Listen! Crunch, crunch, crunch! The leaf makes a noise!"
- **Objective:** "Today, we are going to listen to the leaves! We will make CRUNCH sounds!"

Body (Content & Practice)

- **I Do (Model):** If you have a pile of leaves outside, jump in it! "Stomp, stomp, stomp! Crunch, crunch, crunch!" If you're inside, fill a large bin with dry leaves. Put your hands in and swish them around. "Listen! Rustle, rustle, rustle. Crunch!"
- **We Do (Guided Practice):** Hold your child's hands and jump or stomp in the leaves together. "Let's jump! One, two, three... CRUNCH!" Let them sit in the sensory bin and explore the leaves with you.
- **You Do (Independent Practice):** Let the child play freely in the leaf pile or sensory bin. Give them cups or shovels to scoop and pour the leaves. Narrate the sounds they are making. "I hear you making crunchy sounds! Swish, swish, crunch!"

Conclusion (Closure & Recap)

- **Recap:** "That was so much fun! Our feet and hands made the leaves go CRUNCH! Leaves make a cool sound!"
-

Day 4: Leaf Art Party

Introduction (Hook & Objectives)

- **Hook:** Show the child a plain piece of paper and a leaf. "This paper is empty. Let's put some pretty leaves on it!"
- **Objective:** "Today, we are going to make beautiful leaf art!"

Body (Content & Practice)

- **I Do (Model):** Show your child how to make a leaf print. Take a leaf, gently brush some paint on one side, and press it firmly onto a piece of paper. Lift it to reveal the print. "Wow! A leaf print! So pretty."
- **We Do (Guided Practice):** Help your child choose a leaf. Help them brush paint on it or dip it in paint on a paper plate. Hold their hand as they press it onto the paper. "Pat, pat, pat. Let's see... a beautiful leaf!"
- **You Do (Independent Practice):** Let your child explore making prints on their own. They might just paint the leaves or the paper, and that's okay! Another option is a collage: give them a piece of paper with glue on it and let them stick leaves down. "You are making a picture! You put a leaf on the paper. Good job!"

Conclusion (Closure & Recap)

- **Recap:** Hold up their masterpiece. "Look at your beautiful leaf art! You used red paint and brown leaves. It's wonderful!" Display the art somewhere they can see it.
-

Day 5: Leaves are a Home

Introduction (Hook & Objectives)

- **Hook:** Read a simple board book about fall, pointing out any animals that live in or around leaves (like squirrels or chipmunks). Use a small toy animal and hide it under a leaf. "Where did the squirrel go? Peek-a-boo!"
- **Objective:** "Today, we'll see how little animals use leaves!"

Body (Content & Practice)

- **I Do (Model):** Using a pile of leaves or the sensory bin, take a toy squirrel. "The squirrel is cold! Let's make a cozy bed of leaves for the squirrel." Pile some leaves up and tuck the toy inside. "All cozy and warm!"
- **We Do (Guided Practice):** Give your child a toy animal. "Can the little bear hide in the leaves? Let's hide him together!" Cover the toy with leaves and then find it again. "There he is!"
- **You Do (Independent Practice):** Let the child play with the toy animals and the leaves. They can hide them, make beds for them, or just explore. Ask simple questions like, "Is the bunny sleeping in the leaves?" or "Can the chipmunk hide?"

Conclusion (Closure & Recap)

- **Recap:** "We learned that little animals can hide and sleep in the leaves. The leaves are a cozy home. Bye-bye, leaves! Thank you for a fun week!"
-

Assessment (Informal & Observational)

- **Formative (During Lessons):** Observe the child's engagement. Are they touching the leaves? Are they watching you? Do they smile or show interest when you say "crunch"? These are all signs of learning and engagement.
 - **Summative (End of Week):** At the end of the week, hold up a red leaf and a brown leaf. Ask, "Can you show me the red leaf?" Observe if they point or reach for the correct one. Notice if they say any of the new vocabulary words ("leaf," "crunch"). The main goal is participation and positive exposure, not mastery.
-

Differentiation

- **For a Younger 2-Year-Old or Learner Needing More Support:** Focus entirely on the sensory experience. Guide their hands more (hand-over-hand for painting/gluing). Use fewer words and more sounds and gestures. The goal is simply to touch, see, and hear the leaves.
 - **For an Older 2-Year-Old or Learner Ready for a Challenge:** Introduce more complex ideas. Count the leaves ("One, two, three leaves!"). Talk about the parts of a leaf ("This is the pointy part! This is the stem."). Sort leaves by more than just color (e.g., "bumpy leaves" vs. "smooth leaves"). Encourage them to describe what they are doing ("Are you painting the leaf red?").
-